

The Place of East European Researchers in International Discourse: Critical Discourse Analysis Applied to Corpora from Specialised Journals

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Abstract

Globalisation connects cultures which may have had little awareness of each other and whose values often differ or even are in conflict. The present study explores relations of power in research discourses from the East and West of Europe.

Last century in socialist Bulgaria, one was taught to ignore theories with no Marxist grounding. Among those neglected were names such as Chomsky, Halliday, Firth - researchers who have had formative impact on linguistics in the West. Based on diverging roots, nowadays two disciplines could be expected to exist - Eastern and Western linguistics. With the collapse of the communist block, the interactions between the two is a topic worth investigating.

The discourse in an international specialised journal is explored here as a reflection of the relations in the worldwide research community. Because Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control, it is the method employed to establish whether researchers from the former communist block participate in international discourse on a par with their colleagues from West European countries.

Methods from CDA are combined with Corpus Linguistics (CL) approaches. The conclusions concern the place of East European researchers in international linguistics discourse and sociolinguistic factors shaping the situation. *Key words:* Critical discourse analysis, power, globalisation, corpora, search engines.

Theoretical Background

Power has come to be regarded as a concept connected with discourse in several ways. In a landmark publication Wodak and Meyer (2001:11) write:

Power is about relations of difference, and particularly - about the effects of differences in social structures. ... Power is signalled not only by grammatical forms in a text, but also by a person's control of a social occasion by means of the genre of a text. It is often exactly within the genres associated with a given social occasion that power is exercised or challenged.

Initially, however, the term 'power' comes from the domain of social sciences and the definitions there reflect its essence, rather than the outward manifestations. To begin with, Webber (Calhoun 2002) defined power as "the ability to exert control over people, even against their will". But this is a less extreme formulation of Hume's definition (1748) that power is 'to make others do as they would not have done themselves', which is considered to have given rise to the modern confrontational and bi-polar understanding of power. Alternatively, Arendt (1970:44) saw power as a collective, unifying property - when people act 'in concert to achieve a common goal'.

A situation where all the participants in a discourse have equal power is hard to imagine. When it comes to power connected with theoretical frameworks, there always exist dominant views and preferred approaches, because researchers tend to employ them more often than others. A paradoxical bridge over the conflicting definitions of power would be then that a research view would be considered 'in power' if it provides the means to unite the efforts of a research community in the study of an area of human activity. If this theoretical perspective helps people achieve goals which satisfy their needs, then it would override the application of alternative views and convince people - perhaps even against their wish - to adopt it.

The purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to analyse "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak 1995:204). CDA "studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is

distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed" (Wodak 1997:173).

For the present analysis CDA is both method and object of investigation. The extended instance of social interaction which takes a linguistic form - i.e. the object of the study - is the publication of articles in the journal *Discourse and Society* (DS). This interaction is situated in a social reality where researchers from various countries have the opportunity to publish in the journal while the editors have the power to select what they deem related to the objectives of the journal and of interest to its international audience. The method of the study is the CDA effort to establish relations of inequality: are East European authors treated as equals to West Europeans, are their articles published on a par with the other researchers?

According to the editors, the journal *Discourse and Society* 'explores the relevance of discourse analysis to the social sciences. It stimulates a problem-oriented and critical approach and pays particular attention to the political implications of discourse and communication' (DS website, aims and scope). The editors emphasise that they open the pages for a wide international community of researchers: "Discourse & Society is an international journal. Its board members, contributors and readers are from many different countries, and this will also be reflected in the variety of the topics, approaches and cultural backgrounds of its articles." (*ibid.*)

By impact factor, the journal stands in middle of the scale, neither too high, nor too low:

JCR Impact Factor

2007 Ranking:

23/45 in Communication

52/102 in Psychology, Multidisciplinary

42/96 in Sociology

2007 Impact Factor: 0.729

As can be seen, the journal is read among specialists from different disciplines and 7 in every 10 articles are cited in indexed journals on the following year. Therefore, it can be safely assumed to be popular and respected among the research community.

It has been the case that CDA authors have turned the tools of their research discipline to their own practices. Billig (2008) (also a co-editor of DS) published an article claiming that while CDA practitioners criticise writers for hiding agency and mystifying social processes behind excessive nominalisations, CDA discourse itself abounds in nominalisations. An extended discussion followed, the voices of authorities, such as Fairclough, van Dijk, Martin and others were heard emphasising that grammatical features by themselves are not sufficient tokens of social processes if divorced from the entire social context in which the discourse takes place. However, the very discussion reaffirmed the intent of CDA to discover relations of inequality, no matter where they reside.

The present research also tries to employ the tools of CDA and establish inequalities within the discipline. Unlike Billig's attempt, however, this one emphasises the very social context of producing the discourse. The discussion here proceeds from the point that Linguistics is not the same discipline all over the world. Few people would deny that there has always been an ideological bias in its application. While studying in socialist Bulgaria in the 70s and 80s of the last century (as I did) one would have learned that any theory which has no Marxist grounding "should be either converted to Marxism or liquidated" (Skolimowski 1965:238). Among the names which were neglected because they were non-Marxist were Chomsky, Halliday, Firth, Bloomfield etc, researchers who now emerge to have had a formative impact on linguistics in its Western variant. It could reasonably be expected that in effect two disciplines would now exist in parallel - Eastern and Western linguistics. Now that the communist block is disbanded and the world is globalised, it is worth studying what direction the interaction between the two disciplines is taking.

Globalisation, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica is 'a phenomenon by which the experience of everyday life, as influenced by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, reflects a standardization of cultural expressions around the world. Propelled by the efficiency or appeal of wireless communications, electronic commerce, popular culture, and international travel, globalization has been seen as a trend toward homogeneity that will eventually make human experience everywhere essentially the same.' But the editors of the encyclopaedia add the hedge that this appears to be an overstatement of the actual situation. In effect, the definition claims that patterns would prevail because they are more efficient than others. Such

domination would be ideal, if it was not for powerful elites who strive to preserve their position through the power they have acquired and not through better quality. A second factor is how the effectiveness of the patterns - especially of thought - is mediated: is it the case that the whole world has access to learn of the efficiency of applied methods and can everyone benefit from those methods? This question addresses the issue in hand with this research - do East Europeans know of the effectiveness of research methods, so that they can benefit from their application?

If we assume that Eastern and Western linguistics sprung from two different sources, two disciplines would exist nowadays, with their respective ideologies, methodologies and authorities. If, however, in the past East European linguistics was superficially negating only ideological points and is now resuming its genuine place in an established single discipline, then there would be no difference in the theoretical bases and no two camps.

Methodology

The issues of the journal *Discourse and Society* over a period of 9 years - between the years 1999 and 2008 - were explored from the website of the publisher *Sage*, which opens for free access each October. At other times Bulgarians have to pay to read the full articles. Institutional memberships allow only viewing the abstract for free.

The search engine of the website allows investigations based on the option 'affiliation', which helped establish authors belonging to institutions - mainly Universities - based in the former socialist countries. To make sure that no authors have been left out - because the article may not have been referenced with the author's affiliation, for example - searches were generated by surname endings specific to the respective nationalities. Finally, searches for the country and nationality names were conducted, unrelated to a specific search field. In this way, the number of East Europeans who have published articles in DS over the specified period was established.

Secondly, the biographies of the respective authors were found via an additional Internet search to check their relationship to the post communist countries and their progress in life.

However, looking for domination in the field of linguistics journals can not stop at quantitative data. Qualitative data can be derived by content analysis. By definition, the research discipline 'attempts to infer structural

relations from a multitude of documents, while keeping an eye on the social context in which they were produced' (Krippendorf 2004:25). The structural relations of interest to this research are:

- the concept of locality;
- dominant methodologies;
- recurrent names in the reference lists.

To this end, the corpus was searched for answers to the following questions:

What identities are projected by authors from the former communist countries: place of birth, tenure, funding of research projects?

What topics are they deemed competent to tackle?

Which authors are quoted more often than others?

Which methods prevail in the researches published by the journal?

Quantitative Data

Between 1999 and 2008, 535 articles were published in DS, twenty-two of which - written by authors who could be related to an ex-communist country by birth or affiliation to a University based there. This presents fewer than 4% of all the articles. The same number of articles - 22 - were published by Greek authors, while the Eastern block included originally 10 countries, some of which split into their integral parts and one - East Germany - merged into its Western neighbour. For the sake of comparison, 309 articles, or 58 % are authored by UK-affiliated researchers; 6 articles are from Israeli researchers, which presents 1% for one small country.

The authors come from the following countries: Slovenia (4), Romania(4), Czech Republic (3), Poland (3), Estonia (2), Lithuania, Serbia, Russia. Several ex-communist countries have not been represented in the journal, such as Bulgaria or Hungary, or the other component parts of the USSR, the former states Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Except for Slovenia and Romania, it would be an overstatement to claim that East Europeans publish regularly in DS. The publications can be qualified as sporadic, rather than an accepted practice in these countries. The reasons for this can be various. Is it the case that authors send in contributions but are rejected by the editors, or that the authors do not prefer the journal for their publications? No

claims can be made in either direction, although the nature of the publications sheds some light on the situation.

The additional research on the authors' progress in life shows that the authors of the 22 articles have taken their latest degree - MA or PhD - at a Western University. The subject of the research presented with the publication in DS is related to the topic of their degree thesis. Eleven of the authors are still based in their native post-communist country, six are currently employed in academic posts at Western Universities and reside in the respective countries. Three of them have published more than one article in the journal, others appear in collaboration with colleagues from the country they left.

Research Patterns

All the authors from post communist countries explore topics from their native countries, usually - in comparison with the Western country where they studied. No articles on topics connected with other countries are associated with their names. Contrarily, the search by country and nationality names returns data that East European topics are explored by authors from the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA who have no links to post-communist countries but write on topics connected with them.

The authors based in post communist countries only write in big international teams when they are based in a Western University. In such cases, there is always an ex-patriot currently working in their own country in the team. By contrast, most of the other researches published in DS have been conducted in teams, more often than not - international.

The concept of locality

Firstly, a discussion of the concept of nationality is in order. Common sense associates nationality with the place of birth, or residence, but the survey of authorship in DS adds two further dimensions: academic tenure and participation in international projects. Thus, the editor of the journal, Teun van Dijk, according to his website was born in the Netherlands, but is currently based in Spain as Visiting Professor. He has also held academic positions in Germany, France, Argentina and other countries, which makes it difficult to label him 'a Dutch researcher'. One of his co-editors, Ruth Wodak (data from her website) while originally from Austria, is presented as a member of an

international team working on a project funded by the British Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC) for one of her publications and as a member of an Austrian-Australian collaboration - for another. Therefore, globalisation appears to have re-drawn nationality descriptors, so that labels are too narrow to apply.

The identities of the East European authors in this study, however, are constructed differently. It is usually the case that they were born in an ex-communist country, then specialised at a Western University. Furthermore, the research they publish in DS applies methodologies learned at the Western University. For example, Karmen Erjavec (data from her web page) did her Doctoral Studies in Salzburg (Austria) on Media Studies. The article she publishes in *Discourse and Society* is about the media representation of Roma minorities in Slovenia. She applies van Dijk's model of transitivity (The Netherlands), as well as Steward Hall's analytical framework (UK) for media representations. When she quotes Slovenian, Romanian or Bulgarian authors, it is about the place of Roma populations in the region. Therefore, Eastern references shed light on the social context, while Western authorities provide the analytical frameworks.

Veronika Kalmus, likewise, was born in Estonia (data from her web page), did her Master Degree in Sociology in Oslo (Norway) on youth behaviour in consumer society. Her publication in the journal is about the ethno-political socialisation of Estonian and Russian Children. She applies van Dijk's model of group representations (the Netherlands) and quotes Estonian sources mainly concerning the situation of Estonian children, while her theoretical framework is entirely based on Western references.

Another Slovenian author is Zala Volcic (data from her web page), who emigrated from Serbia to get a PhD in America and is now based in Australia. The topic of her research is Muslim reactions in Bosnia and Kosovo to Bush's War on Terror.

Therefore, the mobility of East Europeans follows a pattern different from that of their Western colleagues. They get a first degree in their native country, then a second degree from a Western University and either return to their native country, or emigrate. Their publications in DS seem to share the characteristic that they combine expertise from their own country with Western knowledge acquired in the course of specialisations abroad or emigration. It is fairly obvious, however, that the theoretical models tend to be Western.

If some Eastern linguistics exists, no trace of it can be found in the articles in the journal. Also, no cases were established where a researcher published without the benefit of a specialisation at a Western University. The question remains open - are studies abroad a must when one wants to be part of international discourse?

Which methods prevail in the researches published by the journal?

Below is an indicative list of methods applied by researchers from Eastern Europe in the articles published in DS:

- Slovenia – van Dijk, macrostructures, Labov (discourse types), Bell (news values)
- Serbia - Bernstein (re-contextualisation)
- Romania – Fairclough (public space dialogue)
- Russia - Fairclough (discursive aspects of social change)
- Estonia – Fairclough (indirect perception analysis)

The theoretical influences on the researches can be summarised as follows: rhetoric analysis, social-psychological research, media analysis, genre analysis, metaphor studies, analysis of cognitive processes. Apparently, none of these theoretical frameworks derives from 'socialist' linguistics. A more thorough study would probably reveal that the respective theoretical topics do not feature in the programmes of study at the communist Universities of the time, either. It is the case rather that the list strikes as a replica of the established formative influences on CDA by Blommaert and Bucaen (2000:454). On the part of linguistics, Hallidayan systemic-functional linguistics is at work, combined with Lakoff-inspired approaches to metaphor, modern argumentation theory, van Dijk's framework for analysing discourse as a social practice and various theories of the narrative, plus social psychology. Thus, the discipline of CDA is practised by the East Europeans within its rightful Western boundaries. All the East European authors seem to blend cohesively into CDA discourse contributing only research concerning the social context of the discourses.

Fairclough (1992) outlines three planes on which CDA functions:

- discourse-as-text – nominalisation, passivisation, etc. Linguistics structures which reveal social attitudes;
- discourse-as-discursive-practice - new genres which structure new relations;
- discourse-as-social-practice - new ideologies and hegemonic relations articulated through discourse.

Several articles in DS exemplify these trends, written by both Eastern and Western researchers. Post communist researches, however, tend to explore the third plane - discourse as social practice. The articles show how discourse presents and shapes the behaviour of social groups in the respective societies and psychological models are applied to gauge attitudes. The problems raised with the respective researches echo the agenda of public life: co-existence of religious communities, integration of minority groups, the repercussions of globalisation on ethnic groups, re-drawing political boundaries and national identity etc.

A single research addresses the second plane: Erjavec (2004) describes a new genre called *advertorials* (advertisements + editorials). Incidentally, this research is the most frequently quoted by the other publications in DS. The subject of linguistic features which project social relationships rarely occurs in the articles of East Europeans, probably because their local languages are of little interest as such.

It can safely be concluded that while drawing upon Western analytical models, Eastern Europeans contribute to the discussion of social issues which present global interest. CDA in its 'Eastern' application is more concerned with issues of sociology and psychology than with language as such.

Which authors are quoted most often?

By frequency, the most quoted names are (the figures indicate the number of quotations in the reference lists for the researched period) :

- Teun van Dijk (159), Norman Fairclough (124), Ruth Wodak (110), Stuart Hall (90)
- E. Schegloff (73) Michael Billig (67), George Lakoff (60), M.A.K. Halliday (63), G.Kress (61)
- M. Coulthard (47) R. Fowler (42) M. Foucault (41) Bourdieu (41)

- C. Goodwin (37), P. Chilton(32), J. Blommaert (32) M. Reisigl (31)
- A. Duranti (29), L. Chouliaraki (27) A. Giddens (25), D. Hymes (23),
- N. Chomsky (17), B. Bernstein (15) J. Habermas (16) J. Lemke, C. Briggs (13)
- V. Bhatia (8), J. Flowerdew (8), A. Gramsci (7), L. Althusser (6)

Of those names, only Fairclough has been associated with a University in Eastern Europe - in Bucharest, Romania. This fact explains his popularity among Romanian authors, on the one hand, and the active role Romanians take in publishing their research in DS - 4 Romanian authors were found with this study, 3 of whom are still based in their native country.

Authorities associated with ideologies, as can be seen, are less popular references than researchers providing analytical models and methodologies. Marx, for example, is only quoted 5 times, but none of the respective authors belong to a post-communist country.

Conclusions

This research was set up to seek answers to the questions: Do two linguistics exist: eastern and Western? Who or what dominates the scene of a linguistic discipline, such as Critical Discourse Analysis? Are East European researchers on a par with their Western colleagues? The following answers emerged from the data and their analysis:

Discourse has been seen as globalising because it addresses topics of universal interest. Researchers explore local problems but they seek and find global projections, which explains why international audiences are interested in specific places and problems. It is fairly obvious that no claims about language can be made without reference to international tendencies.

The methods for studying discourse critically are also globalising. As was demonstrated above, researchers from both East and West alike employ the same analytical models. Hallidayan linguistics, discourse studies, metaphor and narrative analysis, together with social psychological models assert themselves without the need for coercion. As for power and domination, a recourse to Webber, who distinguishes between power and authority, would classify them as authoritative, rather than the result of exerted power. The fact remains, however, that the authorities in CDA come from the 'West'.

Furthermore, if such a thing as 'East-European Linguistics' existed, no trace of it was established in current CDA discourse.

A source of concern may be the fact that relatively few researchers from the post-communist countries publish in the journal under discussion here. It can hardly be claimed that the situation would be the same for other disciplines and publications, but still questions remain to be answered. Firstly, is it true that eastern researchers must specialise in the West to be able to publish in international journals? If that is the case, then a review of the way students are trained at the Universities in post-communist countries is needed to make them compatible with international standards. Secondly, could Western editors ignore voices different from the ones they are used to from their schooling in the West? If so, we have a new Berlin wall which may cause serious problems in the years to come. Thirdly, the issue of teamwork appears problematic for the Eastern researchers. This would certainly impede their integration and unless overcome, the reluctance to engage in joint projects can decrease the quality of their work and leave them aloof in the ever globalising world of research.

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